

AN
INQUIRY

INTO THE

Nature of the Venereal Poison,

AND THE

Remedies made use of to prevent its Effects;

PRINCIPALLY WITH RESPECT TO

Lotions, Unguents, Pomades, and Injections.

ADDRESSED PARTICULARLY TO YOUNG MEN.

By J. CLUBBE, SURGEON, OF IPSWICH.

1782.



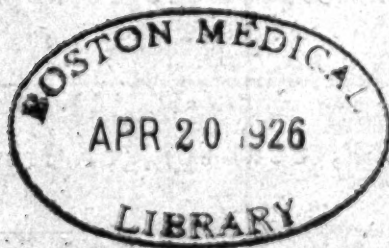
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P R E F A C E.

THE design of the following Inquiry is to detect and expose the fallacious as well as dangerous tendency of those fashionable arcana which are said to cure the virulent gonorrhœa by external contact. For the due discussion therefore of this subject, the nature of the venereal poison is first considered, the structure of the penis accurately described, and the manner in which the poison is received, with its progress and mode of action, are clearly pointed out; from all which, this deliberate conclusion is made, that the effects of the venereal poison are not to be effectually counteracted by external agents, and that the internal use of mercury is at all times necessary for the security of the diseased.

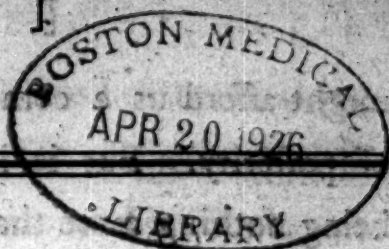
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BUT as a work of this kind, and addressed as this is, to those who have not made phyfic their study, has to encounter their prejudices, and which can only be effected by a firm confidence in the author to render it so generally useful as he could wish, it may be necessary to assure them, that the theory, on which the arguments are founded, is deduced from anatomy and physiology; and moreover that it is well supported by the test of experience.

To the faculty, the real judges of its merit or otherwise, the author declares in the words of a late writer, "He fears his censure least whose knowledge is most extensive."

IPSWICH,
June 29, 1782.

CHAP.



C H A P. I.

On the VENEREAL POISON.

THE Venereal Poison, from being more frequent than any other, as well as the severest scourge to the pleasures of mankind, has undergone repeated analyses, that its nature might be discovered, and some certain specific adapted for its destruction. But hitherto all the labours of the inquisitive and ingenious have proved ineffectual; it still retains its primitive acrimony, and, if neglected or maltreated, invariably produces the same effects as formerly. This opinion is however disputed by many of the faculty, who, on the contrary, assert that the venereal poison daily becomes milder in its nature, that it will probably, in time, wear itself out, and be no more heard of. Were there but so much even as probability in support of such an assertion, it

might afford us a comfortable presage in favor of posterity. But it is hastily embraced, and being nothing more than the result formed on a comparative digest of the sentiments of the antient and modern writers on the subject, it is by no means just in the conclusion.

THE antients having described the effects of this poison, with their usual accuracy and precision, and withal having remarked many dangerous as well as fatal symptoms belonging to it, which are not mentioned by the moderns, the incautious reader, upon this comparative view, has been induced to conclude, that the poison must have been more malignant in their days than in our own; but, if a careful and candid investigation be made of the progress of the poison, the marked difference in its present effects from that which formerly attended it, will, I trust, be found, not to originate from any real alteration in the nature of it, but from other causes.

WHEN the venereal poison first made its appearance in Europe, its effects overwhelmed the minds of men with surprize and consternation; they saw it attack both the sexes indiscriminately, and in a short time commit the most dreadful ravages on the human frame; so terrific and unusual was its operation, that no one attempted to reason on its nature, but tamely submitted to its rage and fury, in full confidence that the poison must be the result of Divine wrath, and not the effect of any natural cause: every one therefore confessed his ignorance of the new pestilence, and all stood idle spectators of its cruel depredations; so conscious were they of its being a judgment from Heaven, that those infected with it were thought unworthy of attention, and were branded with every possible mark of infamy and disgrace; they were proscribed the intercourse of society: even the physicians, whose minds were probably less tinctured with the superstition of the times, were equally puzzled to account for it; and being unacquainted with its nature, they were consequently

at a loss for a medicine to which they could ascribe the specific virtues of an antidote. Under therefore such a cloud of ignorance, the poison must necessarily have occasioned the most fatal consequences, being all this while left to exert its baneful influence uncontrouled, and consequently put an hasty period to the miserable existence of many, merely from the want of a proper remedy to check its career.

IN time, as the poison became more general, and its effects more familiar, the minds of men, emerged from ignorance and infatuation, discovered it to be invariable in its action, and communicable by contact only, and not by the breath, as had been falsely surmised; nor yet by improper diet or bad air, as had been erroneously suggested. They therefore employed their reason, and forming their ideas into some regular system to oppose its effects, succeeded so far as frequently to palliate, and sometimes to expel the poison. This was the first dawn of improvement; but its progress was slow, for their theory on the
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nature and effects of the poison was erroneous and hypothetical, for want of that knowledge which alone gives stability to the healing art, anatomy and physiology. Ignorant as they were of both these sciences, they could not establish any certain treatment either for its expulsion, or mitigation of its effects ; for as anatomy exposes the constituent parts of the body, and physiology explains their different functions, the injury which the parts sustain, and the impediments which those functions receive, from whatsoever cause produced, can no way be traced to their real source but by a knowledge of those sciences. Indeed their practice evinces, they prescribed upon no just principle, for in compliance with the opinions of their predecessors respecting poisons in general, they advised no remedy for the cure of this but what was strongly sudorific, and as medicines of that class are in their nature heating, the effects of the poison were often encreased by them. It is true, mercury was at that time in use, but as no one had ventured to give it internally, and as the exact quantity necessary to do

do service by external application was by no means ascertained, it was oftentimes used so sparingly as to have little or no effect, and at other times so profusely as to carry off great numbers, consequently it fell into disrepute.

It was therefore owing to the very little improvement made in the knowledge and treatment of the poison, that the malignity of it appeared at that time irresistible; consequently it is unfair to admit now the melancholy catalogue of evils recited by the antients, as the necessary and unavoidable effects of it, since superstition as to the cause of those effects, and ignorance of the animal œconomy, contributed principally to their rise and progress.

THAT this was the case is evident from the great improvements which were afterwards made in physick by the knowledge of anatomy and physiology. As soon as those sciences became generally known, a well-grounded theory on the cause and symptoms of diseases was established, the misconceived opinions of the antients were exploded,

exploded, and reasoning, formed on mechanical principles, was introduced to explain the effects of poisons, agreeable to the laws of the animal frame. From this time the dreadful consequences attendant on the venereal poison, and which before had been attributed to occult influence, were explained upon an unerring principle, the effect which corrosive bodies must have upon irritable fibres; "the destroying of their cohesion;" and as the venereal poison usually identified itself by forming ulcers, and otherwise affecting the functions of the body; all those effects were now judiciously ascribed to its peculiar acrimony. From so well adjusted a datum soon sprung a rational method of cure; the faculty were satisfied that the poison was received by external contact, and that its effects could nowise be eradicated, but by the expelling of it from the body; they therefore sought for those remedies which had a power of pervading the smallest series of vessels, and fortunately instituted the internal use of mercury for that purpose. This was the æra in which the venereal poison received its first material check;

check ; for those symptoms of it which before had resisted the efforts of medicine, now gave way to the power of this invaluable drug : henceforward the poison became less and less formidable in its consequences, for the diseased having immediate recourse to this newly-discovered specific, the poison was counteracted before it could have time to commit its usual depredations upon the constitution.

THE improved knowledge in anatomy, physiology, and the fortunate introduction of the internal use of mercury, were then the means by which the venereal poison was originally rendered less deleterious to mankind, than it had proved in the times preceding.

ANOTHER cause which likewise contributed to lessen the effects of the venereal poison, was the rise of a new symptom, the virulent gonorrhœa. I say a new symptom, because the antients, who have so accurately described the confirmed lues or pox, do not mention a discharge from the urethra as an effect of it ; if therefore their

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account is to be depended upon, the venereal poison from the year 1494, the time it was first brought into Europe, to the year 1545, the time the virulent gonorrhœa first made its appearance, exerted itself in a general way upon the body, and of course, from ignorance and neglect, must necessarily produce those fatal consequences which are ascribed to it, for as no precise time when the poison was received could be tolerably ascertained, the blood was often secretly contaminating for several months, till at length it burst forth with relentless fury: the rise of the virulent gonorrhœa was therefore a fortunate circumstance to mankind; its appearance gave early notice of the admission of the poison, and the discharge from the urethra (issue like) directed it to a more immediate exit. This new symptom did therefore prevent the accustomed frequency of universal infection, and by that means induced many to believe that the poison became daily less virulent: but such an inference must not be admitted, for it does not prove that the poison suffered any change in its nature, either previous

to, or after the commencement of the virulent gonorrhœa, but rather, that by fixing on the membrane of the urethra, it produced its effects more locally than it had done before, and of course that the confirmed pox was less frequently experienced. The supervention of the virulent gonorrhœa to the former effects of the poison, did not then lessen its virulence, nor yet render it incapable of producing a pox in its usual degree; for I do aver, notwithstanding what is asserted to the contrary by some modern practitioners, that if that portion of it which constitutes the gonorrhœa is absorbed and conveyed into the blood, the very same effects, if it be permitted to take its course, will be produced by it, as are recited by the antients.

FROM the concurring causes above mentioned, I shall draw the following conclusion: That the milder effects of the venereal poison in our days, on a comparison with the description given of them by the antients, do not originate from the poison being now less virulent than formerly,
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but are indebted to a more precise knowledge of the animal œconomy, acquired by the moderns, and to their having adopted more safe and expeditious methods for the expulsion of it.

THE specific nature of the venereal poison has long engaged the attention of the faculty, some of whom pretend to have discovered it, and in consequence have directed remedies for the destruction of it. But we are certainly ignorant of its nature; that it is highly acrid and corrosive, is evident from the inflammation and ulceration which it produces, but the modification and arrangement of its parts, on which its peculiar action must depend, we can have no adequate idea of, for the intimate nature and crasis of poisons is placed far beyond the reach of human researches. Even chymistry, which analyses the constituent parts of bodies, and is said to be the only science explanatory of their secret operations, has rather darkened than thrown any light upon this subject. Some of

its professors have deduced its effects from alkali; others, from acid; qualities which are diametrically opposite and not naturally inherent in animal fluids; while others, still more eccentric, have placed its nature "in a highly subtle sulphureous fluid, or in a phlogistic æthereal fermentative principle;" and even the judicious Astruc, as inconsistently as any of them, concludes, that its nature is "falso acid." What unintelligible jargon! Surely men would act a more ingenuous part in confessing their ignorance, than by endeavouring to conceal it, and to impose upon mankind under the mask of technical expression. Ingenious men of the profession will not suffer themselves to be thus deceived, nor will, I trust, the unphysical reader; for how great a novice soever he may be in the art, yet he is a judge of consistent reasoning, and must conclude from the above specimen, that chymistry has not contributed the least towards the discovery of this mystery.

IN truth, we can judge of the nature of poisons only from their effects; for first causes and the exact modification of matter are placed too distant for human reasoning to explore. If their effects are invariable, it is certain the causes which produce them are invariable also; and since the venereal poison (like the caninè, viperine, variolous, and others) has continued through successive ages without deviating from some certain and distinguished marks of action, it is surely conclusive that it is in its nature immutable; had it been capable of any change, it is more than probable it must have happened long ago, but as it still identifies its existence by assuming the same form, attended with the same effects when uncontrouled, it is obvious that it has suffered no alteration: for what stronger evidence can we have of the immutability of any body, than that its appearance and effects ever have been, and still are, invariably the same.

As therefore the venereal poison has undergone no real mutation, its various effects as to malignity must not be ascribed to any alteration in the nature of the poison, but to certain incidental and concomitant circumstances, such as climate, diet, constitution, judicious or injudicious application of medicine, neglect, with other causes: for as we can induce no change in its parts, it must retain its primitive action, and continue to produce the same effects upon the body so long as infectious commerce is kept up between the sexes.

THE opinion, then, that the venereal poison daily becomes milder, and, in consequence, that it will in time wear itself out, as though its powers could be exhausted, and the modification of its parts could admit of a change, is such unsupported reasoning as must inevitably fall to the ground, and, of course, nostrum infallibility along with it: for as we are ignorant of the nature of its component parts, we cannot recur to any medicine that with absolute certainty will destroy it.

C. H. A. P. II.

On the STRUCTURE of the PENIS.

THE Penis in the male more usually imbibes the venereal poison than any other part of the body; an inquiry into its structure is therefore very necessary.

It is formed of arteries, veins, lymphatic vessels, nerves, common integument, two cavernous bodies, and urethra.

THE arteries of the penis, like all the other arteries, are branches of one principal trunk, called the Aorta; a large vessel which issues from the left ventricle of the heart, and is minutely ramified throughout the body. The use of the aorta is to distribute the blood which it receives from the heart to every part of the animal frame, and to prepare and separate from it the different secretions and excretions: its form is that of a cone with its base uppermost, it there=

therefore converges as it ramifies, till at last it is extended into exquisitely fine capillary tubes, innumerable branches of which terminate upon the skin, and exhale the perspirable matter, likewise upon all the internal cavities; upon whose surfaces they deposite a clear lymph for moisture and other purposes; the remainder form a junction with the extremities of veins, and return their fluids, as in a circle, to the heart. The aorta is also indued with a contractile power, called the Pulse, which enables it to propel the blood through its decreasing diameter.

THE veins are mere recurrent vessels; they originate at the extremities of the aorta, and though conical, yet, unlike the former, they begin at their apex and terminate at their base; they therefore diverge in their progress, ramify, join each other, and all finally meet in one large trunk, called the Vena Cava, a vessel which empties itself immediately into the right auricle of the heart. The aorta then conveys the blood from the left ventricle of the heart to every part
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of the body, and after it has separated from it the several secretions and excretions, it propels the remainder (now robbed of its nutritious parts) into the extremities of the veins, to be returned to the right auricle of the heart for a fresh supply.

THE above are the only offices which the arteries and veins perform.

THE lymphatic vessels, so called from their containing lymph only, are a separate and distinct system from the former, having no connection with either the arteries or veins, one only of the latter excepted, of which I shall treat hereafter. The aorta, as has been already observed, takes its rise from the heart, and propels the blood from the *centre* of the body to the circumference of it: but the lymphatic vessels originate from all the surfaces of the body, as well interior as exterior, and convey their fluids, reversely of the former, from the *circumference* of the body to the centre of it; at their origin they are imperceptibly small, encrease in their

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diameters as they advance, join each other in their progress, occasionally entwine into small compact bodies, called Glands, and all terminate in the thoracic duct, a large trunk or receptacle, so called from being situated within the thorax or chest.

THE lymphatic vessels of the bowels take also the same rout and termination: they are contradistinguished by the name of Lacteal or Milky Vessels, from the colour of the fluids which they convey; but they are in every respect of the same structure and use with the former: they originate at the surfaces of the bowels, with the same porous-like beginnings, encrease in size as they advance, conjoin, form glands, and all terminate in the same receptacle.

THE lymphatic vessels, therefore, whether originating from the superficies of the body, its internal cavities, or the surfaces of the intestines, perform the same office, and effect one and the same purpose, that of conveying a bland and well-diluted chyle, or milk, to be deposited in
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the heart, that the waste inevitably occasioned by the necessary evacuations of the body may be momentarily replaced; and this office they complete by means of a certain power with which they are endued of absorbing or sucking up whatever is applied to their mouths; those therefore which are placed upon the surface of the skin imbibe from the surrounding atmosphere; those seated upon the internal cavities absorb whatever is exhaled by the arteries more than necessary for moisture; those upon the surfaces of the bowels suck up the milky or restorative parts of our food, and all empty themselves, like so many small rivulets into one stream, in the thoracic duct: the thoracic duct is therefore the grand reservoir into which the whole of the lymph and chyle, from whatsoever parts of the body absorbed, is deposited.

IT is evident then, that the lymphatics are the nutrient vessels; for it is by them alone that the chyle is collected and properly diluted for the purpose of supplying the blood with a suc-

cession of nourishment, to recruit the waste of repeated circulations. The manner in which this supply is furnished is truly curious: the thoracic duct does not empty itself immediately into the heart by any direct communication, because so large and sudden a depofite of the chyle could not have been properly affimilated with the blood; it therefore opens into the left subclavian vein (a vein fo called from its being fituated under the clavicle or collar-bone) and its contents are conveyed with the blood of the latter, first into the vena cava, and thence into the heart and general circulation; by which inestimable contrivance, the animal juices are fed with fresh nourishment in fuch proportion, as to become intimately mixed and blended with the blood by the united force of the heart and arteries.

FROM the above description it is evident, that the lymphatic vessels are intirely diftinct from, and totally unconnected with, the heart and arteries; and likewise, that the latter can
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receive no supply, or indeed any thing else, but what must be conveyed into them through their direct means; in other words, the lymphatic vessels furnish the body with all its fluids; the arteries and veins distribute them to the different parts, for the various purposes of nature.

THE nerves, as emissaries from the brain, and the undoubted organs of sense, controul every animal function.

THE common integument of the penis is a continuation of that general covering of the body which is known by name of the true skin; it is supplied with arteries to exhale the perspirable matter, and with veins to return the superfluous blood; likewise with an infinity of lymphatic vessels; but as their mouths are stronger in their contractions, and from friction and exposure are made less sensible than those seated upon the more delicate skin of the internal prepuce, glans penis, and urethra, so they are not equally open with the latter, to the admission of all bodies.

THE venereal poison, it is said, cannot well be taken up by the absorbents of the true skin, though mercury, by pressure, readily finds its way into them : how far this assertion is strictly true, or otherwise, I shall not here controvert, though I confess, that in case it were applied with a strong friction, I should not be without my apprehensions for the consequence. But, as some proof that the venereal poison does not obtain an easy admittance by the lymphatics of the true skin, surgeons who dress venereal ulcers, and whose fingers are occasionally besmeared with the infectious matter, seldom, if ever, contract the disease, unless, at the time, they have a cut finger, some concealed wound, or excoriation : nor do those labouring under a virulent gonorrhœa (though attended with chancres) contract a pox by handling the infected part, unless their fingers are in the situation above described ; and, from the same cause it is, that the outward covering of the penis, though in contact with the poison during the venereal conflict, is seldom

dom, if ever, infected, unless there are previous pimples or excoriations upon it.

BUT the prepuce, or foreskin, which is a *duplicature* or fold of the common covering, and forms what is called the sheath to the penis, is not so secure: for that surface of it which lies upon the glans, or nut, is composed of a much finer skin than the external; it is, like the former, supplied with arteries, veins, and nerves, for moisture and sensation, and also with an infinite number of lymphatic vessels, which being of a finer texture, and less exposed than those upon the true skin, are more sensible and patent for the reception of whatever is applied to them.

THE cavernous bodies of the penis give it that consistence which is so remarkable in its state of erection: they are cylindrical in shape, and originate near the bone called the Os Pubis; in their middle they are divided by a thin septum or partition, through which blood vessels pass in various directions, and communicate with each other. The name of cavernous is given to them, because

because they appear as if composed of an infinity of cells, but in reality their substance is only an intertexture of arteries, veins, nerves, and lymphatic vessels, disposed in meshes, like net-work, and supported by the common connecting or cellular membrane, from which loose and vascular structure they are capable of great expansion, and are therefore, upon any sudden derivation of blood into them, the immediate cause of that distension of the penis so necessary for coition.

THE urethra is that canal or pipe through which the semen and urine pass ; it takes its rise from the neck of the bladder, and is continued to the end of the penis, where it terminates by a small opening. The internal membrane of the urethra, or that surface of it over which the urine and semen flow, is very delicate and sensible : it is constructed of nerves, arteries, veins, and lymphatic vessels. The nerves give to it extream sensibility ; the arteries continually exude upon its surface a soft transparent glaire like the white

of egg, to defend it against the acrid salts of the urine; the veins return the superfluous blood; and the lymphatic vessels, with which it is innumera- bly stored, absorb whatever is redundantly deposited by the arteries, or whatever else is applied to their mouths by other means.

THE glans or nut of the penis is a continuation of the urethra reflected over the ends of the two cavernous bodies, to which it serves as a cap or covering; as being therefore only an expansion of the urethra, it is similar in structure; it has its arteries for moisture, nerves for acute sensation, and lymphatic vessels to suck up whatever is placed in contact with them.

THE above described parts collectively taken form the penis.

BEFORE I leave this subject, it will be necessary to give some account of the glands of the groin; for though they do not properly belong to the penis, as a part of its structure, yet their frequent connection with the latter, when in-

fectured with the venereal poison, gives them a place of no inconsiderable moment in the following sheets.

THE glands of the groin are small, hard, oval bodies, easily distinguishable by the touch, and situated in the angle between the upper part of each thigh and the belly. They derive their origin from the parts of generation, for the lymphatic vessels of the common integument of the penis, the internal prepuce, the glans, urethra, and testicles, meet in the groin, and are there convoluted and bound together into the form above described.

THE glands of the groin, as being therefore formed of the lymphatic vessels of the genitals, have no other use but that of conveying whatever is absorbed by them into the thoracic duct.

C H A P. III.

ON the RECEPTION of the
VENEREAL POISON,

FROM what has been said of the lymphatic vessels and their uses in the preceding chapter, it is obvious, nay certain, that the venereal poison can no way be introduced into the mass of blood, without being first received by the absorbents, conveyed by them into the thoracic duct, and thence into the subclavian vein, vena cava, heart, and general circulation; and this conclusion is not drawn from any partial opinion of my own, but rests on the authority of the first anatomists of the age, as Hunter, Monro, and many others, particularly the late ingenious Mr. Hewson, who has accurately traced this system of vessels from their rise upon the surfaces, to their termination in the

common reservoir, and has proved beyond a doubt, that it is solely their province to absorb.

THE lymphatic vessels of the penis are therefore the only vessels which imbibe the venereal poison in the act of copulation; but as they perform that office differently, according to their texture and situation, it is necessary to point out those which are materially concerned in the subject before us.

It has been suggested, that the lymphatics upon the true skin or common covering of the body are incapable of absorbing the venereal poison, and the assertion is founded on these reported facts, that neither the ends of the fingers, nor the outward integument of the penis, ever suck in the venereal poison, if they are free from wound or excoriation. If therefore we are guided by observation, and which in general very rarely misleads, the reception of the poison during coition must necessarily be confined to those lymphatics only which origi-

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nate on the surfaces of the internal prepuce or foreskin, the glans penis, or urethra; but which of them do really absorb the poison, the faculty at present are divided in opinion. There are some who assert, that those seated upon the internal prepuce and glans penis, particularly the latter, are solely concerned in the absorption of the poison, and therefore contend, that the urethra is never primarily affected in a clap, for that the poison is first taken up by the lymphatics of the former, and is conveyed to those of the latter by the usual rout of the lymph; which is affirming, that the venereal poison is never imbibed by the lymphatic vessels of the urethra during infectious commerce. But I cannot admit this opinion in its full extent: it is certain that the lymphatics of the prepuce and glans penis join those of the urethra in their way to the thoracic duct; it is likewise certain, that they are, in general, more exposed to the poison in coition than the lymphatics of the urethra: but what does all this prove? nothing more than that the lymphatics of the glans penis
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and prepuce, by ascending into the urethra, may so convey the poison to the membrane of it as to produce the virulent gonorrhœa; it cannot imply, that because the virulent gonorrhœa may be occasioned by a translocation of the poison from the lymphatics of the prepuce and glans, that those of the urethra are precluded from having any primary share in producing the disease; far otherwise, for, in that case, the virulent gonorrhœa could never be the consequence of impure coition, unless the surfaces of the prepuce and glans were at the time exposed, which experience contradicts. It is well known that the prepuce, in some men, so closely invests the glans, that the latter cannot enter into contact with the poison in copulation, and yet such men as often contract the virulent gonorrhœa as those whose glans are naked. In such a state of parts then, it is impossible that the poison should be imbibed by any other lymphatic vessels than those of the urethra; and indeed, considering the situation of the urethra, both before and after emission, it is more than probable that the poison is oftener

absorbed by its own lymphatics, than by those of the prepuce and glans. In the venereal conflict, the orifice of the urethra is for the most part in close contact with the poison, and the consequent attrition of parts in both sexes must unavoidably force it some way into the passage; besides, after the emission of semen, the urinary tube will act like a syphon, for being suddenly emptied, it will, as a temporary vacuum forcibly suck in air, and, most certainly the infectious miasma along with it. I must therefore, till convinced by more powerful arguments to the contrary, assert, that the lymphatic vessels of the urethra are liable to imbibe the venereal poison in the act of coition, with those of the prepuce and glans penis; and consequently, that a clap may succeed infectious commerce without the necessity of the poison being first received by the lymphatics of the latter.

UPON the whole, it is certain, that a virulent gonorrhœa can no way be produced but by the application of the venereal poison to the membrane

brane of the urethra; and it is equally certain, that no vessels but the lymphatics of the internal prepuce, glans penis, and urethra, have a power of taking it up and conveying it thither.

C H A P. IV.

INFERENCES drawn from the preceding Chapter, relative to some OPINIONS respecting the SEAT of the POISON in the VIRULENT GONORRHOEA.

IT is the remark of experience, as has been already observed, that the venereal poison has occasioned less injury to the body since it has attacked the parts of generation in the form of a gonorrhœa than at any former period; and this without doubt, must be ascribed to the inflammation and discharge induced by it, which invites the poison to a more immediate issue than could have been brought about by other means. But, in consequence of this, the virulent gonorrhœa has been considered in a light altogether local, viz. that the poison is confined intirely to the membrane of the urethra: from whence an ill-founded and too prevalent opinion hath arisen, that the gonorrhœa is a disease which must

necessarily cure itself, provided only a due attention to regimen and keeping the bowels open be observed. But this is an opinion however, which in the generality of cases, ought not to be adhered to implicitly; for though the poison undoubtedly makes its exit by the discharge, yet it is by no means certain that the whole of it is carried off in that easy way. An attention to the office of the lymphatic vessels will fully explain this matter.

IT has already been shewn that the lymphatics are the only vessels which absorb, and therefore by them alone it is that the venereal poison is imbibed in coition: it has likewise been shewn, that it is their office to convey their contents into the thoracic duct. From which position it is evident, that as the lymph which they imbibe is always in a state of progression, the venereal poison when mixed with it must be so likewise; and as it is usual for the latter to be retained for the space of six, ten, fourteen, nay twenty days after coition, before it creates inflammation upon
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the membrane of the urethra, and produces the gonorrhœa, a part of it is no doubt, during those intervals pursuing its rout to the thoracic duct; for we must not suppose that the poison lies dormant all the while, nor imagine with some men, that it lies enveloped by the mucous lining of the urethra. Many arguments might be adduced to shew the contrary, and perhaps there are none more in point than the following: the mucous covering of the urethra is given to it by the arteries which are every where interspersed upon its surface, and as those vessels are never in a state of rest, but are perpetually casting forth their contents, the mucous or glairy lining must ever be in a constant state of renovation: was then the poison during coition always enveloped by this mucus, the virulent gonorrhœa could be but seldom, if ever, the consequence of infectious copulation, for the daily secretion of fresh mucus, added to the frequent passing of urine, would inevitably wash it away, the contrary of which almost invariably happens, and therefore makes it certain that the poison must be lodged in the lymphatics.

Again, that the poison does not lie quite dormant during the interval between its being received and making its appearance in the form of a clap, is likewise evident from the effects it produces in the glands of the groin: a bubo is often coeval with the gonorrhœa, or at least is a frequent as well as a very early companion of it; and since the glands of the groin (as have been shewn) are formed of the lymphatic vessels of the genitals, it is certain that when they are inflamed during a virulent gonorrhœa the poison has travelled far beyond the surface of the urethra, and is making hasty strides towards the thoracic duct. This assertion, however, is much controverted; there are many who advance, that the bubo attendant on the recent gonorrhœa arises from consent of parts only, is the mere consequence of inflammation upon the membrane of the urethra, and is totally devoid of venereal infection: but however specious that opinion may appear to the prejudiced and uninformed, a little serious attention will soon detect the fallacy of it: if mere pain and inflammation upon the membrane of the urethra

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can produce a bubo, whatever induces inflammation and pain upon that membrane would produce a similar effect: a man with a stone in his bladder would be subject to the like inconvenience; such would likewise be the effect of a common strangury, or indeed any accidental injury done to the urethra, which we find not to be a consequence; and for this evident reason, that in those cases there is no absorption of acrid matter, no poison conveyed through the lymphatics of the urethra to the glands of the groin; besides, upon the above principle, a bubo must ever attend every highly inflammatory gonorrhœa, and would never be experienced in the milder species, the reverse of which very frequently happens. I shall therefore aver, that if there is either an enlargement of, or even tenderness in the glands of the groin during a virulent gonorrhœa, it is proof presumptive, not to say positive, that the seat of the poison is not then local and confined to the surface of the urethra. So conscious were practitioners formerly of this truth, that till of late the bubo attendant on the virulent gonorrhœa was held,

held, even in its most recent state, as a pocky symptom, for they very justly considered it as an indication that the poison had entered the habit too far for the gonorrhœa to be any longer esteemed a local disease.

SINCE then the virulent gonorrhœa is a disease of the lymphatic vessels of the urethra, occasioned by the action of the venereal poison upon them, and it is at all times extremely uncertain, how far into the habit those vessels may have translated the poison during the many days it sometimes appears to lie inactive, nothing can be more futile than to insist on its locality: the poison may pass many ways into the thoracic duct, and thence into the blood, from the general connection which the lymphatic vessels have with each other, without perhaps producing any manifest effects upon either the prepuce, glans penis, urethra, or glands of the groin, or it may affect them too late to prevent universal contagion. Against this opinion also there are many dissentients, men who assert that the venereal poison cannot

cannot be conveyed beyond the urethra, without there is a wound, ulcer, or excoriation upon the membrane of it, which, in other words, is saying that the lymphatic vessels of the urethra cannot absorb the venereal poison in their natural state: but this proposition is, I trust, fairly refuted in the preceding argument. I shall therefore (while the lymphatic vessels are the acknowledged recipients of the poison, and their power of propelling their fluids is not proved to be altogether suspended by the action of it) still maintain my ground, and say, that a pox may insue from the mildest clap, if it is neglected or maltreated, without calling in the aid of either wound, ulcer, or excoriation to produce it.

THE only situation in which we can judge of the probable locality of the poison, is when it produces a gonorrhœa within a few hours after its admission; from such an early effect we may reasonably conclude, that the poison in so short a time cannot have penetrated far. But even
this

this amounts to nothing more than surmise, and therefore is not conclusive, for we have no data by which we are enabled to ascertain the velocity with which the lymphatic vessels press on their fluids.

As it cannot then be determined, with any degree of precision, even in the most recent gonorrhœa, to what parts the venereal poison is already transferred, the depending upon its being near enough the surface of the urethra, to be carried off by the subsequent discharge, might be attended with serious consequences; of course, the trusting implicitly the cure of a clap to common regimen and laxatives only, would in many cases endanger a pox, and at a time when the diseased are insuspicious of the injury.

BUT I mean not to infer, from what I have advanced, that the virulent gonorrhœa is never cured by the discharge from the urethra. In slight and very recent cases the poison is sometimes effectually carried off by it, for the stimulus
which

which the virus produces on the lymphatic vessels, does sometimes invert their progressive action, and obliges them to return the poison into the urinary passage. But as there is great probability that some part of the poison may be secretly conveyed into the blood, I wish to guard the diseased against every possible hazard which might attend the placing *implicit* faith in such an easy method of cure.

C H A P. V.

ON the USE of LOTIONS, UNGUENTS,
POMADES, and INJECTIONS; con-
sidered as REMEDIES to PREVENT
or CURE the VIRULENT GONOR-
RHOEA.

IN the preceding chapter I have endeavoured to evince, that the venereal poison in the gonorrhœa is not to be safely eradicated (some few cases excepted) by the discharge and common regimen; my objection therefore to the use of all external remedies for that purpose necessarily follows. But as I have not advanced that opinion without supporting it by solid, and as I conceive, conclusive reasoning, by which it will be enabled to stand the test of experience, I shall proceed on the same plan in my endeavour to convince young men, that every attempt either to prevent, or cure the virulent gonorrhœa
by

by external remedies must be futile, and in the highest degree dangerous.

BEFORE I enter upon a refutation of the pretended power of lotions, unguents, pomades, and injections, upon the parts of generation and the venereal poison, I shall first intreat the reader's attention to a short account of the want of success of such applications, as have been made use of by the profession in every age since the virulent gonorrhœa first made its appearance amongst us, and which I shall afterwards employ as part of an argument against their use.

THE virulent gonorrhœa has existed among mankind ever since the year 1545, a period including more than two hundred and thirty years. The practice of physick in Europe has received more improvement during this interval than in any former period; and as the disease has ever been held as the severest scourge upon one of the first passions of nature, the faculty in every age have been tempted to find out some specific for

its annihilation, for what fortune could equal the income of the person who could insure safety to the man of sensual pleasure ! But what has been the result of so many years research and experience ? the disease remaining in the same state both as to its nature and consequences, if neglected or maltreated, in which our forefathers found it.

BUT in all times some pretender to infallibility has started up, and for the prevention and cure of the virulent gonorrhœa the competitors have been very numerous : some, no doubt, have been actuated by a conscientious zeal for the welfare of mankind ; but there is too much reason to apprehend that by far the greater number have been excited by the prospect of gain : with the latter, lotions, unguents, pomades, and injections, were fortunate inventions, on account of their pretended expeditious effects, and the readiness of their application.

PREVENTIVE remedies seem to have been the first thought of by the faculty ; and this very
early

early after the disease made its appearance in Europe; for Gabriel Fallopius, in the year 1555, pretended to have discovered a preventive, which if applied to the glans penis immediately after coition, would obstruct the ingress of the poison. I have said pretended, because it cannot be supposed that a medicine fraught with such a virtue would have remained a secret, for Fallopius was no empiric, and therefore it is highly probable he would not have deprived mankind of so essential a blessing, by suffering this valuable secret to die with him. But that this was the case, or that it proved in the end ineffectual, is clearly evidenced by the introduction of injection by Theodore Mayerne of Geneva in the year 1650. Had Fallopius's preventive been specific, the disease must have been annihilated; for as there is no mention made by any writer on the venereal disease of the existence of the virulent gonorrhœa before the year 1545, had Fallopius discovered a preventive in 1555, only ten years from its first appearance, it is more than probable the disease must have been eradicated, and of course there

would

would have been no occasion after this to have had recourse to injection. But Mayerne, and after him Charles Musitanus, in 1699, strenuously recommend their injections as new discoveries, which evinces that all preceding preventive remedies were inadequate to the end proposed. I mention the above authorities because they were great men at the time in which they lived. From the above period to the present, I am not inconscious there have been many intermediate promoters of similar arcana; and that the empirics of the day have allured the incautious by nearly the same remedies, all which at best are but fallacious and ineffectual; for it is not possible to conceive, that if lotions, unguents, pomades and injections, really possessed the virtues ascribed to them, they would not have received the public patronage; for what greater blessing could be tendered the community, than the discovery of a medicine capable of effectually counteracting the progress of a disease, well known to be more injurious to population than even the sword! That no such patronage should

have

have been given, is a tacit proof that they have no such virtue; and indeed the diversity of opinions among regular practitioners at this hour, respecting the prevention and cure of the virulent gonorrhœa, corroborates my assertion, that the faculty are not in possession of any external specific for either purpose.

BUT lest the reader should consider what has been advanced as merely plausible, I shall examine into their mode of operation, and from thence prove that they cannot act with either certainty or safety.

FOR the sake of perspicuity, I shall discuss this subject under the two following heads, viz.

PREVENTIVE REMEDIES, as Lotions, Unguents, and Pomades.—

CURATIVE REMEDIES, as Injections.

ENOUGH has been already said of the want of success of the above specifics, to convince any one of their inefficacy upon mature deliberation;
but

but as men, greatly addicted to venery, seldom in these cases think for themselves, it may be necessary to explain to them upon just principles, the great danger which must ever attend all external applications. It is extremely flattering to young men to be told that they may indulge in a free use of women with impunity, by only making use of an inoffensive wash or ointment. The prospect of safety is at all times pleasing, but it is greatly heightened when pointed out to them by men whose professional duty it is to undeceive, instead of taking advantage of their credulity.

AT this time there are anti-venereal specifics recommended to the public in the form of lotion, unguent, and pomade; and though I strongly object to them, yet I mean not to reflect upon their promoters, by supposing that the object of mere emolument gave them birth. They are intituled to indulge their sentiments upon the subject; I claim the same privilege; and shall therefore, divested of all prejudice, place before the

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the reader my reasons for differing from them in opinion ; and first, of lotions.

LOTIONS or washes are directed to be used in the following manner : “ *The glans penis and prepuce are to be immersed in them either immediately, or within eight hours after infectious copulation ;*” from which ablution, absolute safety is insured against the contracting of either gonorrhœa or pox.*

THE advocates then for their specific virtues, must admit the following data :

THAT the venereal poison, in the act of coition, is absorbed by the lymphatic vessels belonging to the glans penis and prepuce, and *no other.*

THAT the nature of lotions is opposite to the nature of the venereal poison, and destroys it by contact.

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OR

* See Hannay's bill of directions.

OR that they have a power of putting an effectual check to the progress of the poison when received.

BUT that they cannot insure success under any of the above data, may, I think, be clearly proved.

IN the chapter upon the manner in which the venereal poison is received to constitute the gonorrhœa, it has been shewn that the lymphatic vessels are solely concerned in the absorption of it; and also, that those of the urethra are full as liable to suck it up in the act of coition as those belonging to the surfaces of the glans penis and prepuce. Since then the application of lotions is confined to the surfaces of the latter, even if they had the virtues ascribed to them, they must frequently fail of success; for as they are not advised to be thrown into the urethra, the lymphatics upon that membrane cannot of course be defended by them, and therefore, as general preventives, they must upon this principle inevitably fall to the ground.

IF it is even admitted that the lymphatic vessels of the glans penis and prepuce do *solely* absorb the venereal poison in coition, yet lotions cannot insure safety under the second datum, “ that they are capable of destroying the poison by contact,” because this quality is given to them on supposition only, and therefore is by no means to be depended upon.

IN the beginning of this enquiry, it has been proved, at least presumptively, that the venereal poison is in its nature immutable, and such proof has been drawn from the constancy of its effects : as then the poison is incapable of any change, and certain it is that hitherto no medicine has been able to effect it, the application of lotions upon the above principle must be futile and absurd ; and consequently, whether the poison is taken up by the lymphatic vessels of the glans penis and prepuce solely, or by those of the urethra, is immaterial, for no medicine can properly prevent a disease which has not a power of counteracting the cause of it.

THE third datum, "that they have a power of putting an effectual check to the farther progress of the poison when received," is altogether inadmissible. We know not the force and velocity with which the lymphatic vessels press on their fluids, and cannot therefore with precision determine the exact situation of the poison at any time after coition. It may, *with eight hours* *law especially*, have been propelled too far into the adjacent vessels to be within the reach of the power of lotions; even if they are applied at the most favourable moment, instantly after copulation, it is presumptuous to assert that they prevent its farther progress. That they appear to do so in some cases is certain; for lotions, however variously compounded, all act upon one principle, that of contracting the diameters of the absorbent vessels, and thickening the lymph which they contain; by which effect they detain the poison incorporated with the latter, so long as the general constriction on the vessels continues, or the lymph remains too viscid for circulation.

culation. Lotions do not therefore intercept the poison from any subsequent communication with the mass of blood; they only temporarily restrain its progress; and indeed, no power can effectually impede the ingress of the poison but that which destroys the fabric of the lymphatic vessels, which washes do not effect. Lotions, considered then as preventive remedies, are merely specious as to their virtues; and therefore are in the highest degree dangerous, for as they can neither alter the nature of the venereal poison, effectually intercept the communication of it with the mass of blood, nor occasion its regression when received, their preventing now and then the rise of the virulent gonorrhœa, if they have such virtue, is rendering no service, but is doing real injury to the infected; for the stricture which they induce upon the lymphatic vessels of the prepuce and glans penis to produce such an effect, will in time be relaxed, their thickened juices restored to their due fluidity, and the poison detained in them will by slow degrees be dispersed into neighbouring vessels, and thence

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be secretly conveyed into the thoracic duct, and general circulation : a pox therefore must sooner or later succeed as a consequence of their retentive qualities, and that perhaps at a time too late to check its career. For the venereal poison, when once intimately mixed with the blood, Proteus-like, puts on a variety of shapes, and deludes the insuspicious patient, till some almost incurable evil insues. This is not speculative theory ; such effects of it are frequently experienced by the innocent as well as the guilty.

OIL and unguents (under which class are likewise included liniments) have also their advocates as specifics ; and indeed from their timely application carry with them an appearance of success to which lotions cannot pretend. It is recommended to spread them upon the surfaces of the glans penis and prepuce previous to the venereal act, of course, before the poison can have been admitted ; but notwithstanding this specious advantage, they claim no preference to lotions with respect to their preventive virtues.

OIL and unguents act upon one and the same principle, that of sheathing the spiculated points of bodies ; they therefore act specifically against some poisons, particularly the viperine, from which property they are supposed capable of counteracting the venereal also. But the nature of these two poisons is widely different ; the viperine is highly corrosive, and its spicula are naked ; it therefore produces very violent and sudden effects upon the body, even to the destruction of the vital functions in a few hours ; and this mischief it occasions, not by being incorporated with the whole mass of blood, but by a peculiar irritation and spasm which it produces on the nervous system ; for it is not to be supposed that the hundredth part of a drop of any poison (the quantity said to be ejected by the viper) should in so short a time convert the animal juices from a benign to a corrupted state by mixing with them : Oil and unguents in this case are well adapted to act specifically, for as they sheath the corroding particles of such poisons, they of course prevent

prevent the irritation and spasm upon the nerves which produced those consequences. But they cannot act with the same success upon the venereal; this latter poison is always in some degree sheathed, for being a part of the animal fluids, it is wrapped up in some of their oily and mucilaginous parts, a circumstance which well explains its different degrees of activity: for instance, if it is imbibed from the urethra in a common clap, its effects are slow and moderate, because it is conveyed from the one person to the other enveloped by the slimy and oleose secretion of that membrane, and cannot therefore act perceptibly till time divests it of its covering; but if it is absorbed from an ill-conditioned chancre, its effects are often sudden and violent, because the secretion into that species of ulcer being usually thin, acrid, and destitute of mucus, the poison is taken up naked and unguarded at all its points, and goes therefore almost into immediate action; which is the reason undoubtedly why a man contracts a more virulent gonorrhœa by lying with a woman whose parts are

are beset with chancres, than if she had only a common clap upon her, and also why the poison sometimes lies as it were dormant for several days, or, on the contrary, at other times bursts forth into sudden violence; for there is no truth in the vulgar opinion, that a clap generates only a clap, and a pox a pox. The poison is exactly the same in both, acts invariably alike, and produces different effects merely in consequence of the state of the vehicle at the time in which it is conveyed, of the constitution which receives it, and of the parts which it attacks. As then the oil and mucus of the animal fluids, with which this poison is so intimately combined, are capable only of restraining its immediate effects, it is absurd to suppose that external unguents can answer any better purpose.

THE application therefore of oleaginous remedies to the glans penis and prepuce (whether previous to or after copulation) intentionally to prevent the future action of the venereal poison, must be ineffectual and dangerous; for as such

remedies may restrain its operation for the present, much injury may insue in future from their use; the oleaginous covering will, by the natural heat of the part and repeated circulations, soon be separated from it, and the poison will be left naked to exert its baneful influence when least suspected.

PERHAPS it will be urged by the advocates for oil and unguents, that their virtues as specifics depend not so much upon controuling the effects of the poison, as from preventing its admission. True it is that oil consists of parts which are viscid and extremely cohesive, and therefore form a surface sufficiently compacted to exclude from the mouths of the lymphatic vessels the introduction of gross bodies; but experience has shewn that they cannot act with certainty upon that principle.

AN ingenious surgeon, some years ago, tried experiments with oil in a variety of cases, and was so prejudiced in its favor, that through his authority it was used as a general preventive; it

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was taken up by the debauchée as an impenetrable shield, and became the chamber furniture of every female of pleasure. But public experience soon evinced its inefficacy, and it presently lost its esteem.

INDEED the virtues of oil and unguents, considered as a barrier between the glans penis, prepuce, and the poison, must ever be uncertain; for if it is admitted that the poison is solely absorbed from their surfaces, every absorbing pore must be defended to insure safety; if one is left open, the poison may be taken up, and as it has (like leaven) a power of converting the animal juices into its own nature, the smallest particle of it once received will in time contaminate the whole mass.

ON the application of oil and unguents to the glans penis and prepuce, previous to the venereal act, there is not a doubt but every lymphatic pore may be effectually covered by them; but if we reflect on the state of those parts during coition, the conclusion (that the poison is prevented

admission) must come to nothing. In the act of copulation the surfaces of the glans penis and prepuce are in a constant state of friction; consequently the unctuous body besmeared upon them must inevitably be abraded; the act itself will therefore defeat the virtues of such preventives: for as the friction denudes the mouths of the lymphatic vessels, the poison will be nearly as liable to be absorbed by them as if the specific had never been applied.

OTHERS may contend, that oil and unguents are vehicles only for the more commodious application of anti-venereal specifics. But I have every reason to suppose that the advocates for them depend solely on their unctuous qualities; because the only antidote, mercury, has ever failed of success when used as an external specific, whether in the form of lotion or unguent; here it must be understood, I mean that external application of mercury which is confined to the glans penis, prepuce, and urethra; because if it is rubbed into the skin in sufficient quantity
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to fill the habit, it is well known to be a sure antidote.

SINCE then we know of no medicine which is capable of destroying the venereal poison by contact, it amounts to a certainty that unguents can possess no antidotal virtues but such as are annexed to their nature arising from their oleose composition, and this can only eventually take effect; for this quality of theirs has been proved, both in theory and on experience, to be far too uncertain to lay any claim to implicit faith.

POMADE (a new medicine of the preventive kind) though professedly said by its publisher to be destitute of unctuous matter, and to be formed of the most concentrated balsams, must give way to the same argument; the immutability of the venereal poison, and the impossibility of defending the lymphatic pores upon the surfaces of the glans penis and prepuce, so as to prevent with certainty their admission of a single particle of the poison.

UPON

UPON the whole, lotions, unguents, and pomades, cannot insure any real good to the votaries of Venus : for admit that they prevent the absorption of the venereal poison in the quantity which possibly might be imbibed without their application ; and also that they sheath the corrosive qualities of it when received ; yet they only suppress the immediate effects of the poison, and prevent the first salutary symptoms of its rage, either the virulent gonorrhœa or a chancre ; a treatment by no means friendly to the constitution ; for to detain the poison in the lymphatic vessels of the glans penis and prepuce, is to create irreparable mischief on some future day. Young men are easily deluded, they look not forward to consequences, and judge only of what is present and before them ; if therefore neither chancre nor gonorrhœa succeed the application of lotions or unguents within a short time, they suspect no injury : but I wish them to remember, that if the venereal poison is diverted from its first attack, it afterwards becomes a se-

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cret lurking enemy; stealing insensibly into the habit, it at length displays itself in the form of buboes, ulcers in the nose and throat, nocturnal pains, besides a train of incurable evils.

ON CURATIVE REMEDIES, as Injections.

THE fashionable method of curing the virulent gonorrhœa by injections, proves that the faculty are divided in their opinions as to the virtue of preventive specifics; for was there any certain remedy of that kind, the use of injection would be unnecessary, because the gonorrhœa would no longer be a disease amongst us. The abettors of injection have changed the argument without altering the principles of it; for their arcana are calculated to produce the same effects upon the membrane of the urethra, which preventives are said to do upon the surfaces of the glans penis and prepuce; and are therefore incitements equally delusive to beguile the ignorant. The principle in each which captivates young men, is the speediness of their effects; dispatch coincides

cides with the ideas of youth, and naturally biasses their sentiments in a favor of a cure, which is attended with no other inconvenience than throwing into the urinary passage a harmless inoffensive fluid, capable, as it is said, of putting an effectual end to their disease in as many hours, as might, without such assistance, be protracted out as many weeks.

THAT men, ignorant of the animal œconomy, and who act solely on motives of self-interest, should adopt such a practice, is not at all extraordinary; but that surgeons of reputation should fall into the same error, is a matter of surprize; with them the practice is inexcusable, because it is founded upon principles totally repugnant to the laws of the animal frame.

THE virulent gonorrhœa is a disease of the membrane of the urethra, and occasioned by the venereal poison being applied to it, either immediately by its own lymphatic vessels, or by those originating at the surfaces of the glans penis and prepuce;

prepuce; its existence upon that membrane is therefore necessary to constitute the disease.

INJECTIONS are intended to counteract the effects of the poison, and thence to put an effectual check to the disease in its infancy; for which purpose they are advised to be thrown into the urinary passage as soon as the first symptoms of the virulent gonorrhœa make their appearance, as heat of water and a discharge from the urethra. Injections then, to answer so admirable a purpose, should be capable of destroying the venereal poison by contact; and were they possessed of such a virtue, they would be intitled to the epithet of Preventive, as well as Curative: but that they possess no such repugnant property, is evident from the experience of successive ages, as well as the immutability of the poison itself. Indeed, considered as curatives, they bid less fair for success than even lotions, unguents, and pomades do, as preventives; for the latter are applied either previous to coition, or very soon after, before the poison can have been received,

or at least made any great progress: whereas injections are not advised till there is manifest disease, not until the poison has raised inflammation upon the membrane of the urethra, and is attempting its own discharge by encreasing the secretion of it. Injections then, even if they were indued with properties destructive of the venereal poison, must necessarily fail, for their application is ill-timed, which alone will frustrate every chance for success. The virulent gonorrhœa is not an immediate consequence of the poison, there elapse frequently from three to fourteen, nay twenty days, from the time of its reception to its breaking forth in that form; and from the known use of the lymphatic vessels, and what has been already said, we have every reason to imagine, that during such interval the poison advances beyond the surface of the urethra. Suppose then the smallest particle of the poison to have passed beyond the membrane of the urethra, injections, if they really possessed anti-venereal virtues, could not insure safety to the diseased; for as they act superficially, it

must

must be granted that no more of the poison can be destroyed than what is placed in contact with them ; a circumstance which alone proves that they cannot act with any degree of certainty in curing the virulent gonorrhœa.

BUT they answer in part to the character given of them by their advocates ; for they subdue the inflammation upon the membrane of the urethra, and suppress the discharge arising from it.

CURATIVE injections, however disguised for the purpose of deception, have for their basis an astringent quality, on which their success is made solely to depend. I am the more confirmed in this assertion, because whether they are applied to the inflamed and relaxed membrane of the urethra, the nostrils, eyes, or any other part of similar structure, the same change is induced by them ; the over-distended and debilitated vessels are constricted, and thereby enabled freely to circulate their fluids, and their relaxed mouths are pursed up so as to check all superfluous secretion : upon this principle then, and none

other, do injections specifically act in curing an incipient virulent gonorrhœa.

BUT the consequences of such powers, so unseasonably applied, are very obvious : if the venereal poison has been already received by the lymphatic vessels of the urethra, and without it no gonorrhœa can commence, injection, agreeably to what has been already said, must infallibly lock it up there, and prevent the only security the diseased had against universal infection, the continuance of the virulent gonorrhœa. For however ill-fated young men may stile themselves who find a clap the reward of their amours, their situation, comparatively considered, is fortunate. The venereal poison, in general, attempts its own expulsion by inducing inflammation and a discharge from the parts it first fixes upon (the reason, probably, why the virulent gonorrhœa is one of its most frequent effects) ; the running from the urethra is therefore a salutary effort of nature to evacuate as much as she can of the poison, and ought to be encouraged till her friendly

friendly purpose is answered; astringents, of course, or any applications which restrain the virulent discharge, must be highly injurious; for to constrict the vessels of the urethra, at a time the poison is attempting to make its exit by them, is to counteract the intentions of nature, as by that means the poison is compelled to recede from its nearly local situation, and to retire into the general mass of fluids; whence a lues or pox must in time necessarily insue.

THE use of injections cannot therefore be supported upon the principle of either reason or experience; and, in truth, the numberless instances of their fallibility are stronger arguments against their use, than all the theory which can be urged in their defence.

WHEN curative injections succeed, we may justly conclude it is not in cases of the virulent gonorrhœa; but, that this favourable event is wholly to be imputed to an accidental, but fortunate application of them in a disease of the urethra, which is as harmless as any common inflammation

inflammation upon the eye, nose, or any other part
 of the body of similar structure; for it must be
 understood, that it is not every discharge from the
 urethra, though following suspicious copulation,
 which ought to be deemed infectious, since no-
 thing is more common than for men greatly
 addicted to wine and women, especially if the
 female at the time of coition labours under
 an obstinate fluor albus or the menses, to have a
 slight inflammation upon the membrane of the
 urethra, attended with a yellow running, and
 every other symptom of the virulent gonorrhœa;
 and all this exempt from the least particle of the
 venereal poison either as an attendant or cause.
 This effect upon the urethra is conformable to
 the structure and use of its parts; for the same
 local symptoms must insue, whether the inflam-
 mation is produced by the venereal poison or any
 other acrid body: in this case, which is the
 benign gonorrhœa, in contradistinction to the
 virulent, and which is a disease by no means
 so rare as many may suppose, injections act spe-
 cifically; for by their astringency they close up
 the

the weeping vessels of the urethra, and check the inflammation which was the cause of it.

HOWEVER, preventive and curative remedies, inefficacious as they are to the diseased, must, from a combination of circumstances, not easily separated and laid open to view, seem often to succeed upon a general trial; for take promiscuous copulation in its extent, and consider how many women there are who have not the disease at the time upon them; reflect too, on the many constitutions, which, from inexplorable peculiarities, are not at all times susceptible of being infected; to these add the number of those men who do really receive the poison, but which, by means of some astringent quality in the remedy employed, is repelled, or not suffered to shew itself locally; I say, let these and a variety of other circumstances be maturely weighed, and lotions, unguents, pomades, and injections, will frequently appear, however unmerited, in a specifical light; especially when it is farther considered, that the youths who use
 them,

them, either through partiality, or want of judgment in the matter, cannot, or will not reason upon the possible, or even probable cause of their safety, but impute their escape from infection to such applications only. Under such prepossession and prejudice, the inventors of specifics must be amply paid; I wish I could say rewarded; for while the chances for safety, independent of all applications, are numerous, all which are ascribed to them, and tend to enhance their merit, the repeated injuries sustained by their use are concealed or palliated under the supposition of carelessness in the application, and thus the great cause of mischief is as artfully as dangerously veiled.

To conclude: I have in the preceding pages pointed out the inefficacy of all external specifics; the danger therefore, which in the generality of cases must ever attend their application, is obvious, “that of locking up the venereal poison;” and was I to delineate the many serious effects peculiar to the latter, when left to the full exertion

exertion of its powers, I might probably influence the minds of young men still more forcibly against empirical practice; but as many of my readers, for want of a more general knowledge of physic, or perhaps from a valetudinarian turn might, without sufficient ground, select and apply the more melancholy parts of them to themselves, and be by that means rendered miserable; I shall only observe, as a proof we cannot be too careful in watching this detested poison at the most early period, that experience testifies in a variety of instances, where diseases, for want of some *manifest origin*, or *distinguished marks* to govern the judgment, have baffled the efforts and skill of the most acute physicians and surgeons; and which afterwards, when too late, have turned out to be venereal.

C H A P. VI.

AS I have objected to trusting the expulsion of the venereal poison in the gonorrhœa to the discharge from the urethra, and common regimen, and likewise to every external remedy, whether for the prevention or cure of that disease, it may be expected that I should propose some more eligible method than those which I have controverted; here probably the expectations of young men will be elevated with the hopes of something not only new, but at the same time more expeditious and efficacious. But I wish them to understand I tread not in the insecure path of novelty; and therefore it is mercury which I recommend, notwithstanding the objections which are daily raised against it.

It is asserted by many, that mercury is unnecessary for the cure of the virulent gonorrhœa, and this upon the favorite opinion, that the poison in this disease is always locally situated. But that opinion has been already controverted, and
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proved to be too dangerous for implicit confidence: I shall therefore offer reasons why the use of mercury ought to supersede every other method of treatment. The venereal poison is in its nature intrinsically the same in whatever part of the body it happens to be placed; the virulent gonorrhœa and pox differ consequently from each other, with respect only to the situation of it, for the general or more confined seat of the poison alone constitutes the distinction between the two diseases: since therefore they are produced by one and the same cause, and mercury is universally allowed to be the only remedy on which any certain reliance can be placed for the complete eradication of the poison in the confirmed lues or pox, it is obvious that its use is, in a proportionate degree, requisite for the cure of the gonorrhœa, especially as the poison in this latter disease must necessarily from the office of the lymphatic vessels, be conveyed into the constitution so as to produce general infection, unless care is taken to effectually expel it at the most early period.

THE invariable success of mercury in every case of the virulent gonorrhœa, is also a very forcible reason why its use should always be complied with; its enemies cannot shew an instance where a pox has succeeded this disease, if mercury has been judiciously administered; nor can they with truth assert that the same absolute security against any future effects of the poison is to be obtained by any other remedy. But, say they, mercury is inimical to the constitution, and should therefore be dispensed with in the gonorrhœa. This charge is ingeniously selected, as it coincides with, and is well adapted to support, the opinion of its non-necessity: but it is not founded in fact, for mercury does not necessarily produce those alarming effects which are so industriously propagated and imputed to it by its enemies: on the contrary, it is, under proper management, as safe as it is efficacious, for it raises no ferment in the blood, creates no disturbance in the first passages, if it is given at proper times, in just quantities, and is attended with common care. If administered imprudently indeed,

indeed, either as to preparation or quantity, it must of course do mischief; and this too, as it is a powerful medicine, may be in proportion to its efficacy: but this its effect is not to be imputed to the medicine, but the injudicious administering of it. It is from this source that mercury has fallen into discredit, and the generality of those who object to its use in the gonorrhœa, in order to influence the minds of young men against it, artfully select those bad consequences which are derived from the abuse of it, observing at the same time the most guarded silence as to its virtues. The utmost injury which can arise from the use of mercury in the gonorrhœa, is slight rheumatism and tender gums; and such effects are produced either by carelessness in the patient, some improper preparation, or ill-timed exhibition of it: but surely such consequences should not be deemed of sufficient weight to counterballance the eminent advantage derived from it, that of preventing at all times universal infection or pox; more especially as such injury may be speedily removed by a few plunges into a hot bath.

BESIDES,

BESIDES, mercury is invariably given in the confirmed pox, in large quantities, and for a long continuance, without any implication of consequent injury; why then should it be thought prejudicial in the gonorrhœa, which is a disease produced by the same poison, and operating in a less degree? and which poison, by stealing insensibly into the habit, does afterwards occasion a more tedious course of that invaluable medicine. There are many other arguments which might be enforced in support of the innocence and necessity of the use of mercury; but as there are some men in whom prejudice is so deeply impressed as scarcely to be erased, rather than descend into a needless refutation of every minute and idle objection which has been raised against it, I shall appeal, once for all, to its very general and familiar use in almost every family in the kingdom, and for a variety of diseases besides the venereal, to evince that it is not that baneful drug, which those interested in its disgrace have so industriously laboured to inculcate.

THE above peremptory injunction for the use of mercury, in the cure of the virulent gonorrhœa, proceeds not from motives of interest; for I have no nostrum to dispose of, nor do I wish to impose upon youth a method of cure which is not in some degree consonant with their ideas. What I have advanced as to the consequences which may insue if the cure of the gonorrhœa, is left solely to the discharge and common regimen, as well as to all external applications, is the result of reason as well as experience; of the former they may be judges, without being anatomists; and as to the latter, I trust their candour will acquit me of any intentional deception, when I assert that too many instances have fallen within my knowledge where a pox has succeeded a clap under the management above reprobated, and that no such consequence has ever arisen where mercury has been judiciously given. I therefore seriously advise young men to shun all external specifics; to treat the insinuating language of empiricism with the contempt it deserves, and as they regard their health to apply to physicians
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and surgeons of credit; as men of honour, they will unite their character and the welfare of their patients in mutual interest, and by a timely and proper exhibition of this invaluable medicine, will remove their disease with safety and certainty.

I HAVE now finished my enquiry; and, if in my discussion of the subject of it, I shall appear to have nurtured a too favourite child, let it be remembered that I am disinterested in the choice; that I have no view in raising it up, but as an example for young men to profit by. I affirm no harm can ensue from placing the most implicit faith in what I have delivered; on the contrary, I pronounce much good may arise; but as I wish not to incur the belief of my readers in the arguments I have advanced, unless they are perfectly reconcileable with their ideas, I shall rest the issue of my labours on the literal sense of the following quotation:

————— *Si tibi vera videtur*
Dede manus; aut si falsa est, accingere contra.

F I N I S.